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The Dissenters Apology:

OR, THEIR
PRINCIPLES and CONDUCT justified,

FROM THE
GROUNDLESS and SEVERE
CENSURES

LATELY SET FORTH AGAINST THEM

By the EDITOR of
Dr. WARREN'S SERMONS.

IN WHICH
The Nature of SCHISM, CHURCH AUTHORITY, and CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS of RELIGION is considered; and the Memory of their Fathers purged from the Odium there cast upon them.

Humbly addressed to the IMPARTIAL WORLD;
and especially to the WORTHY GENTLEMEN,
whose Names are prefixed as SUBSCRIBERS to
those SERMONS.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. NOON, at the *White Hart* in *Cheapside*; and R. HETT, at the *Bible and Crown* in the *Poultry*. MDCXXXIX.



T H E

Dissenters Apology.

GENTLEMEN,

WE are far from being *fond* of troubling the World with Matters of Dispute : The present Situation of our COMMON CAUSE, both as *Christians* and as *Protestants*, calls for Union and Peace : But *Disgrace* cuts deep ; and to fall under *public Odium* is one of the most afflictive Evils of Life.

IN several of Dr. *Warren's* Sermons, lately honoured by your Subscriptions, the *Publisher* (for the worthy *Author*, now with GOD, has kinder Sentiments of us) brings us forth upon the Stage, and presents us to your View in a very *odious* and *disgraceful* Light. As 'twas in his Power to have suppress'd these ungenerous and severe Censures,

and 'tis by *Him* we are thus *publicly* arraign'd and traduced, he has made himself answerable for the black Charges he has advanced. By prefixing your honourable and worthy Names, he appeals to *You* as JUDGES of the Brand he fixes on us: We are too ambitious of your Esteem, *Gentlemen*, to sit easy or silent under it, when we know ourselves innocent; we stand forth therefore, as in *your Presence*, to make our Defence.

THE Sermon which the *Editor* has placed in the Front, as recommending it to *special View*, is intitled, *The Schism of the Samaritans compared with that of our Protestant Dissenters*. He herein not only likens *us* to those antient vile *Schismatics* the *Samaritans*; but, to render us yet *black*er, “ presents *Jeroboam* as the *Father* of that “ *Schism*, and charges *us* as guilty of the “ same abominable *Trespas*s, which is *em-* “ *phatically* called *HIS*, *by which he made* “ *Israel to sin*---Our *Schism*, like his, pro- “ ceeds from *Reasons of State*, and meer “ *carnal Regards*, from a vitious *Indulgence* “ of *Ease and Sloth*, from *Malice and Re-* “ *venge*---From the *Unruliness* of our *Lusts* “ and *Passions*; and whatever *pious Pre-* “ *tences* we make for our *Division*, there “ is no *real Goodness* at all at the Bot- “ *tom*, but *Pride and Ambition*, *Hypocri-* “ *fy and Malice*: *Mens unruly Passions* and “ *worldly Interests* first lead them into them, “ and

“ and the *crafty Politics* of cunning Men
 “ improve them. And I don't scruple to
 “ say,” (the *Publisher* adds, with whom
 alone we are concern'd) “ that 'tis from
 “ these Roots that all our Schisms and Di-
 “ visions have sprung up and spread abroad
 “ amongst us ; Conscience indeed was ever
 “ pretended, but I think it no Breach of
 “ *Charity* to think it was *but a Pretence*(a).”

WE acknowledge the *Gentleman's* Cour-
 tesy in making us *Samaritans* and *Children*
 of *Jeroboam* ; but his Zeal in doing us this
 Favour, has drawn him into two gross *Hi-*
storical Mistakes, which quite spoil the *Truth*
 and *Beauty* of his Comparifon. The first is,
His tracing up the mutual Hatred betwixt the
Jews and Samaritans to the Separation of the
ten Tribes, from the two, in the Reign of Re-
hoboam : And affirming that Jeroboam's Sin,
was what gave the first Rise to that Difference
and Animosity (b), &c. For those *Samaritans*
 in our Saviour's Time were not the Poste-
 rity of the *Ten Tribes*, but a quite *different*
People ; as every one fees in the *History*,
 2 *Kings* xvii. 18, 20, 23, 24. The *Ten Tri-*
bes were ALL rejected of God, carry'd Cap-
 tive, and disperfed through the vast Empire
 of *Assyria*, and never return'd more ; and
 various *strange Nations* were transplanted
 from *Cutbel, Ava, Hamath*, &c. to inhabit

(a) *Sermon* I. p. 8, 15, 17. (b) *Sermon* I. p. 2, 8, 9.

Samaria and its Cities in their stead, who thenceforward were called *Samaritans* : So clean were the *Israelites* removed, that there was not a *single Priest* left in the Land, *Vers.* 27, 28. 'Tis true, there were many *Jews* who afterward mingled with these Nations, but not till near *two hundred Years* after their Translation hither ; and even the *Jews* that did so, were such only as belonged to the *two Tribes* who join'd *Manasseh* in his Revolt, and set up the Temple and Worship in Mount *Gerizim* (a). 'Tis therefore certainly wrong to say, *If we will trace it up to its first Original, we must look as far back as the Reign of Rehoboam, and that Jeroboam's Sin was what gave the FIRST RISE to that Difference.*— The learned Dr. *Prideaux* (b), agreeably to the Sacred History, gives a quite different Account, "*This Hatred, betwixt the Jews and Samaritans, FIRST BEGAN from the Opposition the Samaritans made against them, on their Return from the Babylonish Captivity, both in Rebuilding their Temple, and repairing the Walls of Jerusalem.*"—There was therefore no Necessity of bringing *Jeroboam* into the Account of the *Samaritan Schism* : The Doctor breaks thro' the Fences of *historical Truth*

(a) The *Samaritans* were the Offspring of those Nations, which the King of *Affyria* placed in the Cities of *Samaria*, when he had carry'd away the ten Tribes captive. *Jos. Medo. Disc.* XII.

(b) *Prid. Connec. of Hist. Part L B. VI. pag. 414.*

to come at his *dissenting Brethren*, and give them this Lash. But,

SECONDLY, suppose *Jeroboam* had indeed been the *Head* of the *Samaritan Schism*, what is that to *us*? Yes, 'tis observed,---- "The Trespas of *Jeroboam*, which the Scripture notes as *emphatically* HIS, in the MAIN consisted ONLY [N.B.] in his setting up Temples and Altars at *Dan* and *Bethel*, in opposition to the Temple and Altars at *Jerusalem*, and offering Sacrifices in *other* Places, than those which God had appointed; it was not," he once and again asserts and lays a Stress upon it, "that he changed or altered the LAWS and Customs *Moses* had left, but his commanding them to be observed in *another* PLACE than that which God had appointed (a)." Here again the Doctor greatly mistakes. For the DIVINE Lawgiver had said expressly, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any GRAVEN IMAGE; nor any Likeness of any Thing in Heaven or Earth. Thou shalt not BOW DOWN thyself to them, nor serve them* (b). ---- But, *Jeroboam* made TWO CALVES OF GOLD, and said unto the People, *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem, behold THY GODS, O Israel* (c). Was not this *changing* a fundamental LAW, and *altering* a most sacred and essential Custom of that Religion. His worshipping in *another* PLACE, in which the WHOLE of

(a) *Serm.* I. p. 7, 8. (b) *Exod.* xx. 4, 5. (c) 1 *Kings* xii. 28.

his Crime is here made to consist, was a trivial Offence in Comparison of his *erecting GRAVEN IMAGES*, and likening the God of *Israel* to a *four-footed Beast*: Concerning which Sin God speaks by his Prophet with the greatest Indignation. *They made a Calf in Horeb, and worshipped a molten Image; thus they changed their Glory into the Similitude of an Ox that eateth Grass (a)*. But *this*, it seems, was a light Matter; his breaking off from the PLACE of Worship was the *main*, yea the *only* Trespas which the Scripture stigmatises as *emphatically* HIS. As though the violating the topical, ceremonial, temporary Sanctity of *Jerusalem*, by worshipping in *another Place*, was worse then violating the eternal immutable Spirituality and Sanctity of the DIVINE NATURE by *likening it to a Calf*. Had the good Doctor shewn us but half the Candour he does our pretended Father *Jeroboam*, we had not fallen under this Scourge.

WELL, but if *Jeroboam's* Case be not allowed a proper Parallel to the *Dissenters*; the *Samaritans* must. "The only Difference
" betwixt *them* and the *Jews*, as to Religion,
" was about the *Place* of Worship: They a-
" greed in their Belief of the same God,
" own'd both of them the same Religion, and
" differed *only* about the *Place* where they
" should perform it." Yet our Lord expressly

(a) *Psalms* cvi. 20.

says, *Ye (Samaritans) worship ye know not what. We (Jews) know what we worship (a)*; plainly implying some Difference as to the *Object*: But to let that pass-----“ The *Samaritans* separated
 “ themselves from the Temple of the Lord at
 “ *Jerusalem*, and set up distinct Altars and Places
 “ of Worship of their own, in Opposition to
 “ those established by the Law; so that their
 “ Sin and Guilt consisted in this, and in this
 “ *only*, that whereas the *established Church* of the
 “ *Jews* was such, that a Man might safely hold
 “ Communion with it, yet the *Samaritans* wil-
 “ fully *separated* from it, refused to join in Com-
 “ munion with it, and set up *distinct* Congrega-
 “ tions and Assemblies in *Opposition* to it. —
 “ Hence we see the *true Nature* of *Schism*, and
 “ likewise the great *Sin* and *Guilt* of it. As to
 “ the *Samaritans*, it consisted in a *needleless* Sepa-
 “ ration from the established *Church* of God a-
 “ mong the *Jews*; so as to the *Christian Church*
 “ it consists in a Man’s *separating* himself from
 “ that *particular Church*, to which, according to
 “ the Constitution of it, he does of right be-
 “ long---This, I believe, is a *Charge* the *Dissen-*
 “ *ters* from our Church (as unwilling as they are
 “ to hear it) will never be able to answer---Can
 “ it then be a Crime to look on such Men as
 “ *Schismatics*, or to call them *Sinners (b)*? No,
 let ’em be called *this*, and what worse blind Zeal
 can suggest, if they cannot clear themselves from

(a) *John* iv. 22.(b) *Serm.* I. p. 21, 22, 24.

so trifling and impotent a Charge. The Argument stands thus against us — The Samaritans needlessly separated from the *established Church*, and from the only appointed *Place of Worship*; so do the *Dissenters*; therefore as the former were, so are the latter, *Schismatics* and *Sinners*. Could such an Argument as this be published by a learned Doctor without knowing it to be most weak? For,

FIRST. As to the *PLACE of Worship*, on which so mighty a Stress is laid: Is there now any *PLACE* in which ALONE GOD's Worship is to be paid, and *from* which to withdraw and worship in a *distinct Place* is schismatical and sinful? Such the *Jewish Temple* was. Was not *Jerusalem* chosen out of all the Tribes as the *Place* where God would put his Name? There he visibly and locally dwelt, reigning as *King of Israel* in the Temple as in his *Palace*; sitting on the Mercy Seat, as upon a *Throne* betwixt surrounding Cherubims. And THITHER, he expressly commanded, *they should bring ALL their Offerings, their Sacrifices and Vows*---Take Heed to thyself that thou offer not thy *Burnt Offerings* in EVERY PLACE that thou seest, but in THE PLACE which the Lord shall choose in one of thy Tribes, THERE shalt thou offer thy *Burnt Offerings* (a), &c. Against this express Command *Jeroboam* and the *Samaritans* notoriously offended: But will our Accuser dare to say, that there

(a) Deut. xii. 5, 6, 11, 13, 14.

is any *like* Command, against which the *Dissenters* sin? Is there a PLACE now upon Earth, *in which* God hath chosen thus to *set his Name*, and *to which* he hath *confined* the solemn Worship of his People? If there is; let it be shewn, and we will presently break up our separate Assemblies, and all resort to it.

DID the *Publisher* imagine, the *worthy Gentlemen*, into whose Hands this Performance was put by him, did not know that this *Unity of Place* was a Circumstance PECULIAR to the *Jewish Dispensation*; and that when *that Dispensation* ended, all Holiness of *Places*, all Confinement of Worship to any particular Mountain, or City, or House, *entirely ceased*? Has not our great *Lawgiver* himself expressly determined this Case? *Woman, believe me the Hour cometh*, the Dispensation is commencing, *when ye shall neither in this Mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. i. e.* When Worship paid either *Here* or *There*, shall not be more acceptable than what is paid in any other Place: *But the true*, and only acceptable, *Worshippers shall*, be such as, *worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth* (a). And *I will*, says the Apostle, *that Men pray EVERY WHERE lifting up holy Hands* (b).

AGREEABLY to this Doctrine did not our LORD and his *Apostles* pray or preach in *Gardens*, on *Mountains*, from a *Ship*, on the *Sea Coast*? *Where* did they usually administer the Sacra-

(a) *John* iv. 21.(b) *1 Tim.* ii. 8. *εὐ παντὶ τότῳ.*

ments, those solemn Parts of publick Worship? In Places set apart, and consecrated for this Purpose? Not at all. They generally baptized in *Rivers*, and *open Fields*: And as to the Sacrament of the *Supper*, it was instituted, and first celebrated by our LORD and his *Disciples* (a), and afterwards by St. *Paul* (b) in a *private Chamber*: And the Dwelling Houses of *Nymphas* (c) and of *Philemon* (d) were as real and true Churches in the *Apostle's* Account, as any *Buildings* amongst Christians ever have been, or can be since. This then being the undoubted Doctrine and Practice of *Christ* and his Apostles; whence (in their Name) comes that *Sacredness* of PLACES of which we now so often hear! Is there any Power in Men now to stamp a peculiar Sanctity on a Building or a Place which the Apostles had not? Or if the Apostles really had this Power which their *Successors* the *Bishops* now upon Occasion solemnly exert; how was it they never used it? Did they hide their Talent in a Napkin? Or is it that we in these latter Ages are more jealous for God's Honour and the Dignity of his Worship, more careful that it be performed *decently and in Order*, than these first Believers were? But we forbear the Freedoms the Subject will admit, for we would not offend.

As for any fixed *Places* then, WHERE we ought to worship, and from whence to withdraw

(a) *Luke* xxii. 12. (b) *Acts* xx. 7, 8. (c) *Coloss.* iv. 15.
(d) *Philemon* ii.

and to worship in *another* is schismatical and sinful, the CHRISTIAN *Dispensation* knows nothing of any such. Though the *Samaritans* were *Schismatics* for not offering their Oblations in *that particular Place*, where, and where *only* God had commanded them to be offer'd up ; yet the *Dissenters* are not so, because there is now no *particular Place* concerning which God has thus commanded ; on the contrary, their *Divine Master* hath told 'em, that *wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, there he will be in the midst of them* (a). The Charge then is most conspicuously weak as to this Part---Let us proceed to the other.

SECONDLY. “ The *Samaritans* needlessly separated from the *established* Church of God, “ the Church *establish'd* by the *Law*, when they “ might safely have held Communion with it, “ and set up distinct Congregations and Assemblies of Worship in Opposition to it.”---And will not this reach the Case of our modern *Dissenters*, and prove *them* and the *Samaritans* to be *Brethren in Guilt* ? Yes, *Gentlemen*, if a Church establish'd by the all-perfect and infallible God, and one establish'd by imperfect and fallible *Men*, are the *same*. Yes, if any *Lawgivers* now on Earth have the same Dominion over Conscience, the same Authority in Matters of Worship and Religion, with the *Divine Lawgiver* of the *Jews*. But is there not an *infinite* Disparity be-

(a) *Matt. xviii. 20.*

twixt Injunctions, and Laws, and Establishments as to Religion which are *merely human* ; and those which are *DIVINE* ? Is it possible that GOD should establish any Mode of Worship but what is *perfectly FIT* ; or require our *Assent* to any Article of Faith, but what is *certainly TRUE* ? But is it not possible ; has it not often happen'd ; yea, is it not impossible but it must always happen, till a Spirit of Infallibility is poured out upon them, that when *Men* presume Authoritatively to decree Rites and Modes of Worship and Articles of Faith, they may, they have, they always will egregiously *mistake*, and establish *Superstition* instead of *Decency* ; and *Error* for *Truth* ? Look into all the World, *Spain, Turkey, China*,--what are the great Propps upon which the infinite Superstitions and Errors which there reign entirely rest ; are they not the Authority and Establishment of human Laws ? And what have been the Effects of such Establishments and Laws ? Have they not been *Discountenance, Persecution*, or even *Death*, to all the *HONEST* and the *VIR-TUOUS*, whose Lot was cast amongst them ; to all who *scorn'd the Meanness* of seeing with the Eyes, and believing with the Conscience of those who happen'd to be richer or stronger than themselves ; and who had the *Honour, the Integrity, the Greatness of Soul* to make *RIGHT* the *only* Rule of their *Actions*, and *TRUTH* of their *Faith* ?

HUMAN Lawgivers have Power only over our *Bodies* and *Estates* ; to order and dispose of *those*
as

as the common Civil Good shall require ; but to Matters of *Conscience* and *Religion* their Authority *cannot* extend. For POWER of this kind GOD never *has*, he never *can* give to any, without giving at the same Time a correspondent WISDOM to direct it. Every Degree therefore of *Authority over Conscience*, necessarily implies an *equal* Degree of *Infallibility* ; For GOD the¹⁰ Fountain of *Order*, can never AUTHORIZE any¹⁰ Man to misguide and seduce his Creatures, or to²⁰ injoin them what is sinful ; but if he has given any Man a *greater* Degree of *Authority* in Matters of Religion, than he has given him *Infallibility*, that Authority may be employ'd in Support of Irreligion, of Error and Vice ; and then, Men may be irreligious, be vitious and err by the *Authority* and in the Name of GOD. This we humbly apprehend to be an absolute Demonstration that Matters of *Faith* and *Religion* are a Prerogative of the *Divine Dominion*, from which all human Legislators, because they are *fallible*, are utterly shut out.

OUR *Substance* and *Lives*, under the Restraint of general Laws, GOD hath subjected to our earthly Rulers, and to them we humbly resign them ; but our *Conscienc*es or *Minds* he hath reserved to *Himself* ; and hath given Power over *those* to no other Ruler but his SON *Jesus Christ* : For his suffering of Death, He was crown'd with this Honour : And because the Lamb was slain and hath redeemed us by his Blood, He hath all the

of 2^o p 34. 7 20, 1 41 Treasures

Treasures of Wisdom bid in him (a); and is therefore *worthy to receive* this Homage of Conscience, and to be alone obey'd in Things pertaining to Religion. We esteem it our Happiness that we live under Governors who have this just Apprehension of the Extent of their Dominion; who are willing to allow that CHRIST be acknowledged *sole King* in his Kingdom the *Church*, as he hath granted them to rule in their Kingdom the *World*; who give every Man *that Liberty* which God and *Nature* have given him, and which *Christianity* claims for him; even the Liberty of judging for himself in Matters concerning which GOD has given them *no Authority*, and of worshipping in that *Manner* and *Place* his Conscience directs. As GOD then, and CHRIST, and our indulgent *Legislators* have asserted to us this natural, this unalienable Right; we think it *unkind* and *unrighteous* in our Brethren to revile us for using it, and to traduce us before the World as *Schismatics* and *Sinners*.

YEA, *Gentlemen*, you will permit us to declare, that we esteem ourselves *bound* by our Allegiance to CHRIST, whom GOD hath made *King*, sole Sovereign and Lawgiver in Things relating to Religion, by our Allegiance to HIM we think ourselves *bound* humbly to *disclaim all Authority* of earthly Rulers in Things of this Kind. We apprehend it would be justly construed, an Invasion of his *Prerogative*, and a

(a) *Heb.* ii. 9. *Coloss.* ii. 3. *Rev.* v. 12.

Betraying the Rights of his *Spiritual Dignity* and *Crown*, should we give up our Consciences to the Dominion of any temporal Governors, or acknowledge that any Man, or Body of Men, on Earth can make Laws which shall in the least bind us in Matters of Religion. As *religious* Affairs are *his* Province, and *civil* Affairs those only to which the Authority of civil Rulers extend, we apprehend it to be the Will of God, the *eternal Fountain* of all Power, that every Branch of his universal Government be kept within its proper Bounds: That all Governors and Kings under HIMSELF the *supreme* MONARCH should each know his Place, and act in his *appointed* Sphere: That his *Son* JESUS, who is a spiritual King, should *alone* be regarded in things of a spiritual or religious Nature; and temporal or earthly Kings in Matters of a temporal or civil Nature. This is most evidently the *Constitution* or *Plan* which the eternal AUTHOR of all Government has laid down for its Administration; and were it carefully observed, Harmony, Friendship, and all the Blessings of Society would be the certain Effect; whereas by going off from this *original Plan* of Government, infinite *Disorders* have broke in upon Mankind.

WHENCE came the Gibbets, the Racks, the Flames, by which Millions of the *bravest* and *most honourable* of the Earth have been rudely thrust out, as *unworthy to live upon it*: Came they not *hence*, that human Governors, not content with the Sphere of Power God had

given them (Dominion over Mens Bodies and temporal Concerns) would extend themselves *beyond their Line* ; claim'd Dominion also over Men's Consciences ; and exercised Authority in Matters of *Worship* and of *Faith*, which the *Almighty Sovereign* had withheld from them, and had rested only in his SON ? Came they not *hence*, that fallible and vain Men would be *wise* and *great* above the Measure assign'd them, and so in reality became *little* and *foolish* ? That not satisfied with ruling in their *own* Kingdom, the World, they grasp'd at the *Crown* of CHRIST, and would needs likewise rule in *his* Kingdom, the Church ? This hath been the grand Source of all the Ruin and Confusion with which in every Age the *Church*, not to say the *World* too, hath been grievously oppress'd. Whereas, let every Branch of the *universal Kingdom*, over which GOD supremely reigns, keep but its *proper Place* ; let earthly Kings preside over earthly Things, to which alone the Authority vested in them extends, and leave spiritual and religious Things to the Superintendency of CHRIST, whom alone GOD hath anointed *King* in his Church, and made President of those Matters ; and hence Order and Peace would immediately flow ; Things then would revert to their original and proper Form, and the *eternal* GOVERNOR looking down would see *all Things*, as he first made them, *beautiful* and *very good*.

WE trust therefore, the *Gentlemen* to whom the *Publisher* accuses us, will not impute it, as
 he

he ungenerously does, to *Malice, Revenge, Ambition, Hypocrisy, &c.* that we dissent from the *Church establish'd*; and that we cannot declare it an *ARTICLE of our Faith, That the Church* (meaning thereby any Body of Men on Earth) *hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies* in the Worship of God, and *Authority in Controversies of Faith*(a): And that we think ourselves *obliged* thus publickly to enter our solemn Protest against a *Doctrine* which appears to us subversive of all Order, Peace, and Religion in the Church; and which tends to let in a Deluge of Tyranny, Superstition, and Persecutions upon it; yea, and which has actually so done.

THE *Spiritual KING* to whom we bow our Knee, hath expressly forbid us *to call any Man MASTER upon Earth*; *i. e.* to acknowledge any Authority in Points of Faith and Religion but *his, who only is our Master in Heaven*, and hath told us that in Things of this Nature *ALL WE ARE BRETHREN* (b), having *equal* Authority and Power over each other; that is, really none at all: And that *IN VAIN do Men worship, when they teach for Doctrines the COMMANDMENTS OF MEN* (c). And we are wont thus to reason (if our Reasoning be wrong we shall thank the Person who will shew it) should any *foreign Prince from Italy or France*, claim Authority in *Great Britain*, and send us over Injunctions requiring us to keep them; would not

(a) XXth Article of the Church of England. (b) Matt. xxiii. 8, 10. (c) Mark vii. 7.

our Allegiance to *King GEORGE* the *only* Sovereign of those Realms oblige us *NOT to obey*, but to treat them with Neglect? Even so when any *civil Powers* take upon them to *decree Rites*, and to make Injunctions in *CHRIST's Church*; our Fealty to *Him* requires us *NOT to obey*, but to treat them with Neglect. The *Church* is as much *CHRIST's Kingdom*, *exclusive* of all others; as *Britain* is the sole Right and Dominion of *King GEORGE*.

LET the *Comparison* then be *justly* made, and it will appear, that the *Dissenters* are the loyal *Jews*, and the warm Spirits who accuse us are the *Jeroboamites* and *Samaritans*: WE steadily adhere to the ESTABLISHMENT of *CHRIST*, the *only* Lawgiver in the Church; and keep *his* Sacraments and Forms of Worship exactly as HE injoyn'd them: This our Brethren *do not*; they know they *do it not*; they know that neither *CHRIST* nor his Apostles *kneel'd at the Supper*, nor *baptiz'd with the Cross*, much less did they *absolutely injoin* any such Rites, or make them *Terms of Admission* into the Church; and yet, for *Reasons of State*, and *worldly Regards*, Regards to human Authority, they are *gone off* from this *original Constitution* of Christ and his Apostles, and have *establish'd* A Church upon ANOTHER Bottom or Plan, making Things necessary to Communion in *THEIR Church*, which Christ never *practis'd*, much less made necessary to Communion in *HIS*. Who now are the *Samaritans*? THEY, who *confessedly* GO OFF from the

the *original Divine* Establishment, and submit to one that is *human*; Or *WE*, who *hold it fast*, and refuse to *receive for Doctrines*, or practice as Parts of Worship, the *Commandments of Men*?

THERE is one Consideration more, GENTLE-MEN, which we humbly beg Leave to add on this Part of our Defence; 'tis this. If *ANY* Civil Governors have Authority from *GOD* to *establiſh* Rites and Forms of Worship, which shall bind the Consciences of their Subjects; *ALL* must have the same. If the King and Parliament of *England* have it (and if you please to join the Clergy with them) the King and Parliament and Clergy of *France*, of *Spain*, &c. must be acknowledg'd to have it too. 'Twill not be pretended that the Civil Governors of *Britain* are privileg'd with any *peculiar* Authority from Heaven beyond those of other Realms. The Subjects of the *Mogul*, of the *Turk*, of *Italy*,—must then be *as much* oblig'd by the Establishments and Decrees of *their* Rulers in religious Matters, As the Subjects of *Britain* are by *theirs*: And, *how much* that is needs not be said.

BESIDES, had the worthy Doctor forgot, that the *very SAME* Authority and Law which establish'd the *Church of England* in the *SOUTH* of *Britain*, hath establish'd the *Church of Scotland* in the *NORTH*? Now if *wilfully* to *separate from the Church establish'd by Law*, and to *set up distinct Congregations*-----be so grievous a Sin in *South-Britain*, and so much offends God and *hazards our Souls*: Is the good Doctor in
no

“ Communion in the establish’d Church are “ sinful ;” they are then at Liberty, and do well *occasionally to conform* to it, as a Testimony of their Charity: But they are at Liberty also, and do well *statedly to dissent* from it, as a Testimony of their Dislike of what is human and imperfect in it. Herein they tread but in the Steps of a noble Pattern, St. Paul ; and like him are reproach’d for it ; who *became all Things to all Men (a)* ; and consented to circumcise Timothy (b) in Condescension to Jewish Weakness. But yet, when an Invasion was once attempted upon the Rights of the Disciples, and Circumcision was *insisted on* by many of the Christian Jews as a necessary Term of Communion in their Church ; see, how the Spirit of the glorious Hero is roused ! He gives the Alarm to his Followers ; charges them *to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST had made them free* ; and *would not give Place to these demure Infringers of it ; no, not for an Hour (c)*.

THE Dissenters, ’tis presumed, do not generally think that KNEELING at one Sacrament, and the CROSS in the other, are absolutely *sinful* ;* but when any *fallible Men* shall take upon them to make *these* indispensable Terms of Communion in CHRIST’s Church, so as that no one shall be received by them to Christian Fellowship who does not submit to *them* ; they then think it their Duty openly to protest against this Viola-

(a) 1 Cor. ix. 19. (b) Acts xvi. 3. (c) Gal. v. 1. Chap. ii. 4. 5.
tion

tion of their Rights. The same Authority which the Church of *England* has to *injoyn Kneeling* as a necessary Term of Communion with them ; the Church of *Scotland* has to *injoyn Sitting* ; the Church of *Geneva*, *Standing* ; the Church of *France*, *bowing*, *prostration*, *crossing*, or whatever else they please: And thus the *one Body* or *Church* of *Christ* is unavoidably rent into Parties and Sects ; and the COMMUNION-TABLE, at which he hath commanded ALL his Servants to eat in Token of their COMMUNION or *Fellowship* with each other, is made an Engine to split and tear it in Pieces, and to fire Men with Hatred and Rage at each other. One Party refuses to admit the *other* to partake with them, if they will not submit to *that Ceremony* or *Gesture* which CHRIST'S *Wisdom* never did, but which their *Weakness* hath decreed--And, does not every one see *where* the Cause and the Guilt of such Schisms must lie ? Not on those who are willing to communicate with their Brethren *on the Terms* which *Christ* and his *Apostles* have fixed ; but on those who, besides *these*, demand a Submission also to Terms of their *own Devising*. Give us but the Liberty our common *Master* hath left us, and which we allow in our Churches to all, particularly of eating the *Christian Supper* in what Posture we think best, and we are ready to receive it in the establish'd Church. But if Terms *not Christian* are required as necessary to our Admission to any Communion or Church, we are humbly bold to say, *that* Communion or Church

is

is so far *not Christian* ; 'tis a *Church* or *Society* founded upon *other* Principles, and form'd upon *another* Plan than that of *Jesus Christ* ; and therefore the separating from *that*, is no Separation at all from the *Church of Christ*.

AND having thus made our Defence to the odious Charge of SCHISM ; we gladly leave it to the Arbitration of the *Gentlemen* before whom we stand arraign'd, whether there is the least *Comparison*---Betwixt, the Separation of the *Samaritans* from the Church establish'd by *DIVINE Authority* at *Jerusalem*, and from which the *Almighty Lawgiver* commanded they should in *no wise* withdraw, nor offer their Oblations in any *other Place* : And the Separation of the *Dissenters* from the Church establish'd in *England* by the Authority only of *Men*, and from which the very Authority which establish'd it has given us Leave to withdraw, and to erect separate Places of Worship, and hath taken these separate Places under its Protection. We are confident in whose Favour our worthy Judges will pronounce ; we stand acquitted before them.

BUT we proceed to another black Charge---
 “ They have not agreed, even among them-
 “ selves, at different Times, in the Manner of
 “ making their Defence : They at first gave as
 “ a Reason of their Separation the pretended
 “ *Sinfulness* of our Communion, charging the
 “ Terms of it as *POPISH* and *ANTICHRISTIAN*.
 “ AFTERWARDS, when they found the Church
 D “ establish'd

“ establish’d upon the *Principle* of an *Indulgence*
 “ to *scrupulous Consciences*---they abated of their
 “ ancient Rigour, they no longer charged our
 “ Communion as sinful ---But now at last they
 “ have so far *soften’d* their first OUTRAGIOUS
 “ CHARGE, that they would fain make the
 “ World believe there is little or no Difference
 “ betwixt us, but they and we make but one
 “ and the same Church (a).” What, is it our
 Fault then that we mend and grow better? If
 we see the Error of our Fathers, and turn from
 their crooked Ways; and desire now to come
 nearer the *Establishment*, must we be snubb’d
 and look’d sour on as fraudulent and fawning
 Knaves? Yes, we are to stand fast to our *Fa-*
thers Principles, and to give the *same Reasons* with
 them for our Dissent, or else we are to be *sus-*
pected; yea, actually charged as Hypocrites and
 Dissemblers, “ As concealing our *true and real*
 “ Reasons, and changing our Principles as Times
 “ and Circumstances change---As acting from
 “ Pride and Ambition, from Hypocrisy and
 “ Malice, from crafty Policy and Worldly In-
 “ terest, from Perverseness and Disappoint-
 “ ment (b).”

BUT should not our warm Accuser have re-
 membered, That the *Right of judging for our-*
selves, is the very *Basis* of our *Dissent*, and the
 glorious, the fundamental Principle upon which
 our whole Religion rests? Whatever Reasons

(a) *Sermon I. p. 17, 18.*

(b) *Ibid.*

our *Fathers* gave for their Actions, our *grand Principle* forbids us either to act upon, or to give the same any farther than we see them founded upon TRUTH. They are *other* Persons, not DISSENTERS, who are oblig'd to declare their *Faith* in the *same Words*, and to subscribe the *same Articles*, with their *Fathers* just emerg'd from *Popish* Darknes, tho' their *real Sentiments* and *Faith* are quite *different* from theirs. Are they DISSENTERS who disbelieve, perhaps ridicule, the *Athanasian Doctrine*; and yet when ministring before GOD, as Preachers of his sacred Truth, solemnly pronounce the *Athanasian Creed*, and declare, that *whosoever would be SAVED must keep it WHOLE and UNDEFILED, or else he shall WITHOUT DOUBT PERISH EVERLASTINGLY*? Were they DISSENTERS who from Sermons, Addresses, Decrees, &c. assured their Sovereign, *That they believed and maintain'd that their Kings deriv'd not their Power from the People, but from GOD; that to HIM only they are accountable; that it belongs not to Subjects either to create or to censure, but to honour and obey their Sovereign, who comes to be so, by a fundamental hereditary Right of Succession, which no RELIGION, no LAW, no FAULT, nor FORFEITURE can alter or diminish* (a)---And that to assert it *lawful to resist Kings, is impious, seditious, scandalous, damnable, heretical, blasphemous, and infamous to the Chri-*

(a) *Address from the University of Cambridge, Anno 1681.*

stian Religion (a). And yet a few Years after invited over a *foreign Prince* to invade the Kingdom of their Sovereign; offer'd him their *Plate* to support his Expence; and when mounted to the Throne meekly bow'd before him, and swore him Allegiance as their *King*? Had *Dissenters* done thus, they had with some Face been revil'd *as acting from no Principle of real Goodness, but from Hypocrisy, Worldly Interest, crafty Politics, concealing their real Reasons, and changing them as Times and Circumstances change----* But, such rude and uncourteous Censures, the *Christianity*, we have learnt, teaches us to forbear.

BESIDES, be it acknowledg'd that we are *less rigid than our Fathers*. Have not our Brethren of the Establishment as much soften'd and departed from the Principles of *theirs*? Did not the first *Fathers* or *Framers* of the Church of England, represent the Church of Rome as idolatrous and antichristian, declaring, *That as it now is, and hath been for the Space of nine hundred Years, it is so far from the Nature of a TRUE CHURCH that nothing can be more so----* *That it is not only an Harlot, as the Scripture calls her, but a foul, filthy, old, withered Harlot, and the Mother of Whoredoms, guilty of the same Idolatry, and worse than the Pagan* (b) ----

(a) The Decree pass'd at Oxford in full Convocation, An. 1683.

(b) The Words of the *Homilies*, which every Clergyman publicly declares and subscribes with his Hand, that they contain a Godly and wholesome Doctrine, fit to be read in Churches by Ministers.

But

But have not her *modern Clergy* soften'd a good deal this *Rigour* of their Fathers; allowing the Church of *Rome* to have been all along a *true Church*? Yea, do they not even *glory* in their spiritual Descent from her; tracing up their *Ecclesiastical Pedigree* thro' this nine hundred Years Reign of Idolatry and Vice; and rest even the *whole Dignity* of their Character as *Ministers of Christ*, and the *Validity* of their Ministrations, on their being the spiritual Offspring of *Her*, whom their Fathers call'd a *filthy, wither'd, old Harlot*? An uninterrupted *lineal Succession* from the Apostles, they say, is necessary to constitute a valid and true Minister in the Church; but this lineal succession, or spiritual Generation, is transmitted to the present Clergy *only* thro' the Hands of those Monsters of Impiety the *Pope* and his *Bishops*: And yet behold! the *Ecclesiastical Character* received from *such Hands*, is their Glory, and their Strength; and all amongst us who are not thus *ecclesiastically descended*, are a spurious and false Brood, and not to be acknowledged as valid *Ministers of Christ*.

BUT to come closer to the *Inconsistency* with which we are charged-----“ They at first pretended the Sinfulness of our Communion, “ charging the Terms of it as *Popish* and “ *Antichristian*: But afterwards, when they “ found the Church establish'd upon the Principle of Indulgence to scrupulous Consciences, “ they abated of their ancient Rigour”—— And where, in the Name of Equity, is the *Inconsistency*

consistency of this? Whilst the Church was establish'd upon *Principles of Persecution*, allowing no *Indulgence* to scrupulous Consciences, but fining, imprisoning, and delivering *thousands* to Ruin, for no other Crime than not owning her Authority in Matters of Religion; she might, no doubt, most *justly* be said to be both **POPISH** and **ANTICHRISTIAN**. For this Claim of Authority, and enforcing it on Mens Consciences by *Bodily Pains*, is the very *ESSENCE* of *Popery*, and the grand *fundamental Principle* on which the whole *anticristian Hierarchy* rests. But when the Church, convinced of this its gross and fundamental Error, returned to a Christian Temper, and was no longer established on Principles of Tyranny, but of Indulgence and Toleration, then our Fathers, as well became them, returned *occasionally* to her Communion; they forgave the horrid Injuries which had been done them (a); and declared their Readiness to walk with her on Terms of Christian Love. It was not our *Fault*, surely, but our *Honour*, to have *softened our first outrageous Charge* (as it is called) when the **OUTRAGIOUS TREATMENT**, which occasioned it, was softened into a just and generous Indulgence.

BUT to conclude this Point——If by those who *at first gave*, &c. he meant our Fathers the **PURITANS**, we absolutely deny the Fact.

(a) See a Sketch of the Cruelties exercised upon them in the third paragraph after this.

The far greater Part of that noble Army of *Confessors* never disowned the Church of *England* as a *true Church*, nor pronounced her Communion sinful; but continued under great Hardships to hold Communion with Her, till in her great *Clemency* and *Wisdom* she thrust out near two thousand of them, laborious and pious Ministers and Lecturers, at once. There were a Party indeed called the *Brownists*, whose Sentiments were more rigid, who said many plausible Things to prove *the Church* to be in its Constitution and Frame *fundamentally* wrong; in that it was formed much upon the same *Plan*, supported by much the same *Power*, and ran far into the same Measures of *Violence* and *Persecution* with that of *Rome*; and therefore they renounced Communion with Her, as absolutely sinful; but these were comparatively a small Number; the Generality of the *Puritans* had more catholic Thoughts. Upon the whole then, this Charge of *Inconsistency*, and *changing our Sentiments as Times and Circumstances change*, vanishes into Air: Or, could it ever so fully be proved upon *Us*, 'tis well known WHERE it rests with far greater Weight. The *Dissenters* are not the ONLY *Hypocrites* and *Time-servers*, shifting their Principles just as their *Ambition*, and *worldly Interest*, as *Reasons of State* and *crafty Politics* prompt them; they have BROTHEREN in this Guilt, not quite so old as *Jeroboam* and the *Samaritans*---a venerable and grave Body, whose Company they much better like.

BUT

BUT the *Publisher* has not done with these *false Brethren*: there are further Proofs of their
 “ formal Hypocrisy, and that they make Religion only a Cloak for their ungodly Designs,”
 which must not be forgot. “ It had been
 “ long given out by the Leaders among the
 “ Dissenters, that our Church was far gone in
 “ *Popery*——But mark the Falshood and Hypocrisy of these Accusers! When *Popery* really began to shew itself amongst us——was
 “ publicly professed, practised, and upheld
 “ by our civil Governors, so that it became
 “ dangerous to oppose it; did these Men then
 “ cry out of *Popery*, or any ways endeavour
 “ to stop its Growth? No such Matter: they
 “ rather encouraged it, and chose to side with
 “ it on all Occasions. They were the MINISTERS of the CHURCH of ENGLAND ONLY who had the Courage to obey GOD
 “ rather than Men. They ONLY wrote,
 “ preached, and publicly disputed against the
 “ Errors and Corruptions of *Rome*, whilst the
 “ PROTESTANT DISSENTERS either had nothing to say; or thought it best to sit still
 “ and say nothing; and so deserted the Defence of their Religion, and gave it over as
 “ a Prey to the Teeth of its Adversaries (a)”.
 Gross Misrepresentation! We defy the *Publisher* to support it; and intreat our WORTHY JUDGES to hear our Defence.

u. 7. 2. 24. v. 1. p 38.

(a) Serm. II. pag. 36, 37, 38, 39.

THE

THE *Dissenters* had a very few Years before got themselves great Honour by various Tracts and Sermons against Popery; yea, a celebrated Course of Sermons, which were then extant, well known, and commonly read. They moreover, at this very Time, preached with great Freedom both in City and Country against it; they publickly catechised their Youth upon the Points of *Image-Worship*, *Adoration of the Host*, *Transubstantiation*, and the *worshipping of Angels*; and this, in Parts of the City where the *Papists* were most prevalent; and even when they were openly insulted for so doing. Public Conferences were held, though not without great Hazard, by a Gentleman, a Dissenter, afterward a Minister, with a *Jesuit* of the *Savoy*; which issued in an entire victory over the *Priest*, and the Satisfaction of many Gentlemen of the Church of *England* then present. Besides, let us ask——The vast Multitude of *Converts* which then flocked into the Church of *Rome*---WHENCE came they? at all from the *Dissenters*? 'tis well known they did not: So opposite were our Principles, and our People so well fortified against the *popish Errors*, that scarce an Instance of such a Convert from amongst us can be produced. But from the *Church of England* there went *Thousands*: And indeed, its XXth Article being granted, viz. *That the Church hath Power to decree Rites, and Authority in Controversies of Faith*, the Transition is extremely easy, nor can all the Learning or Wit of Man

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easily

easily prove it to be either unreasonable or unsafe.

BUT still it is urged, the *Dissenters did not PUBLISH* ——— And is not *This* with Barbarity thrown in their Teeth, when the *Liberty* of doing it was actually denied them? By several most flagrant and undeniable Instances, *This*, if called for, can be proved. They wrote, they brought their Writings to the Press; their Pieces were highly approved and recommended by no less competent Judges than *Tillotson*, *Clagget*--- But the *Licensers* (for the Press was then under Restraint) arbitrarily refused to let them be printed off: And when several (*a*) were thus repulsed, no marvel if the rest thought it prudent to spare themselves the Pains: And yet behold! we are now insulted before the World, and openly traduced as *deserting our Religion, and tamely giving it up a Prey to its Foes*. Oh the *Honour* of such *Heroes*! First to wrest our Swords from us, and tie up our Hands, and then post us for *Poltroons*, as not daring to fight.

BESIDES: Had not the *Dissenters* been now harraßed with above *twenty Years* most grievous and wasting Persecution? At the Instigation of the *Bishops*, turned out of their Livings, banished from their Houses, forbid to come within five Miles (unless upon the Road) of any City, Corporation, or Borough Town, or any

(a) *Pool's Continuator*s. Dr. Tuckney, Dr. Bates, Hammer, Pendlebury, &c.

Place where they had been Ministers; plundered and impoverished by villainous Informers, rapacious Courts---their Papers rifled, and Books sold either to pay Fines, or to buy Bread for themselves and their starving Families. “ An
 “ Estimate has been published of near *eight thousand* Protestant Dissenters who had perished
 “ in Prison in the Reign of K. *Charles II.* And
 “ by severe Penalties inflicted on them for assembling to worship G O D, they suffered in
 “ their Trades and Estates, in the Compass of
 “ *three Years*, at least *two Millions*. One Mr.
 “ *Jer. White*, having carefully collected a List
 “ of the Dissenting Sufferers and Sufferings,
 “ had the Names of *Sixty Thousand* Persons who
 “ had suffered on a religious Account, between
 “ the Restoration of King *Charles* and the Revolution of King *William*; *five Thousand* of
 “ whom died in Prison. The same Mr. *White*
 “ told Lord *Dorset*, that K. *James* had offered
 “ him a *thousand Guineas* for the Manuscript,
 “ but he refused it, and concealed the black
 “ Record, that it might not appear to the Disreputation of the Church of *England*, for
 “ which some of the Clergy sent him their
 “ Thanks, and offered him an Acknowledgment, which he also refused. If we admit
 “ the dissenting Families in *England*, of the several Denominations, to be no more than an
 “ hundred and fifty thousand Families, and
 “ that each Family suffered no more than the
 “ Loss of three or four Pounds *per Annum* from
 E 2 “ the

“ the Act of Uniformity, the whole will amount to twelve or fourteen Millions. A “ prodigious Sum for those Times.” As much perhaps in Value as twenty Millions now. *Vide Neal's Hist. of the Purit.* Vol. IV. p. 554.

AND is it any Wonder, *Gentlemen*, if Persons broken and depressed by so long a Scene of Troubles, had shewn no great Forwardness to embark again in a Controversy they had before so well managed, and which they saw to be now in good Hands? Besides: Whom did it so behove to engage and drive out the Monster POPERY from the Land, *as* those who had been chief Instruments of bringing it in? When the *Dissenters* joined heartily with the *brave Patriots* of the former Reign in a Bill to *exclude* the *Duke of York*, and it went triumphantly through the *lower House*, what lost it in the *House of Lords*? A Bench of *obsequious Bishops* put forth their *reverend Hands* to lift the *POPISH Successor* to the Throne; they threw in their Weight *against* it; whereas had but *twenty* of those Fathers of the Church given their Votes for it, it had infallibly passed the House-- And what gave the King that *mad Courage* to attack the Constitution, and exert the *dispensing Power*? Was it not the high Strains in which the *Clergy*, for near a Century, both from the Pulpit and the Press, had been complimenting the Crown? *Their* Addresses, Decrees, &c. concerning the PASSIVENESS with which Subjects ought to submit, and the DAMNABLE SIN
of

of resisting their Prince, emboldened him with so high an Hand to break down the Fences, and let *Popery* in upon us. *Who* then were so obliged to put themselves forward, and stop the impending Torrent, as those who had the chief Hand in opening the Breach?

BUT, if the *Dissenters* had not put an helping Hand, they should not, like vile *Samaritans*, have *bindered* the Building of the House of GOD---“ They rather encouraged the Idolatry
 “ and Superstition of *Rome*, and sided with it
 “ on all Occasions---And had not the Courage
 “ to obey G O D rather than Men”---But this is lashing beyond all Bounds, and all Hope of Belief. Let a noble *Lord* (*Hallifax*) perfectly acquainted with the Transactions of those Times, be heard in our Defence----“ As thankful as
 “ they (the *Dissenters*) were for their Liberty,
 “ they were fearful of the Issue, neither can any
 “ Number of Consideration among them be
 “ charged with hazarding the public Safety, by
 “ falling in with the Measures of the Court, of
 “ which they had as great a Dread as their
 “ Neighbours.” Next we call forth a learned and pious Bishop, (*Burnet*) no less versed in that whole System of Affairs, to give Testimony upon the Case----“ The *wise* and *generous* Behaviour of the main Body of the *Dissenters*
 “ in that Juncture, has given them so just a
 “ Title to our Friendship, that we must resolve
 “ to set all the World against us, if we can ever
 “ forget it; and if we do not make them all
 “ the

“ the Returns of Ease and Favour when it is in
 “ our Power to do it.”--But we have a Testimony
 yet behind, more *august* than even these; the
 LORDS in a Conference with the *House of Commons*
 upon the *Occasional Bill* declare, “ That in the last
 “ and greatest Danger the Church was exposed to,
 “ the *Dissenters* join’d with her, with all imagi-
 “ nable Zeal and Sincerity, against the Papists
 “ their common Enemies, shewing no Preju-
 “ dice to the Church, but the utmost Respect
 “ to the *Bishops* when sent to the Tower.”---
 More needs not, but might easily be added to
 purge us from this Calumny. We will not re-
 turn upon the uncautious *Publisher* his own
 Words.----*Mark the Falshood and Hypocrisy of*
our Accuser! He has not treated with due Re-
 gard, surely, the Character and Judgment of
 the *Gentlemen* before whom he cites us. Did
 he think them *wholly unacquainted* with the Hi-
 story of those Times? Or could he presume
 them of so narrow and ungenerous a Turn of
 Mind, as to like to see a Body of worthy and
 brave Men thus brought upon the Stage, dress’d
 in horrid Forms, and baited by two Furies,
 FALSHOOD and PARTY-ZEAL? The Mercy
 of God be praised, this is not so agreeable to
 the *politer* Taste of the present, as it was to the
 Bigotry and Blindness of the former Age.

WE pretend not to justify every high Expres-
 sion of Thanks which *some Dissenters* then ad-
 dress’d to the King for his Indulgence: But does
 the Doctor know of no *Bishops* and *Clergy* as
 guilty

guilty as *they* ; guilty, without half the Palliation or Excuse ? Had two or three of our *Leaders*, as he calls them, when brought from the Darknes of *deep Oppression*, into the bright Sun-shine of the *Royal Favour*, been a little dazzled at the mighty Change ; had they been guilty of any mean Compliance when warmly caressed and courted by their Prince ; was it strange ? or a Crime never to be forgot ? Had not many MITRED HEADS for several preceeding Reigns been paying *servile* and *unworthy* Obeysances around the Throne ? Yea, were there not at this very Time several of these *venerable Fathers* of the Church who *carried their Compliances*, (as a Brother (a) of their own confesses) to a *shameful Pitch* ; offering up their *Allegiance to the King without Limitation or Reserve* ? Did any of our *Leaders* sit and act in that tyrannical illegal Court, the *Ecclesiastical Commission*, form'd by the King, under Pretence of reforming, to humble and destroy the Church ? No. But THERE *Protestant Bishops* sat and acted amongst *Popish Lords* ; even *Popish Lords* exercising in Concert with *Protestant Bishops* an arbitrary ecclesiastical Jurisdiction over a trembling Church. “ The Bishops of *Durham, Lincoln, Chester, Litchfield and Coventry, St. Davids, Rochester and Oxford*, went all the Lengths of the Court, and set forward Addresses of Thanks to his Majesty in the most exalted

(a) Burnet.

“ Language.

“ Language. ---- An Address came from the
 “ Clergy of *Chester*; justifying the King's De-
 “ claration as issuing from his Prerogative.” ---

(b) We are sorry to rake into these Frailties of our Predecessors; let the Faults of the former Age lie buried with its Persons: Nothing but *Justice* to the aspers'd and insulted Memory of our Fathers, should force the unpleasant Task upon us---But we now leave it to our worthy JUDGES, whether *the Ministers of the Church of England* are to be transmitted to Posterity, with such unlimited Applause, as the ONLY *Persons who had Courage to obey GOD rather than Men, and to oppose increasing Popery*; but the *Dissenters* with the odious Brand of *chusing rather to ENCOURAGE and SIDE WITH it on ALL Occasions?*

WHILST we are considering these Sermons, *Gentlemen*, which the Editor has recommended to your particular Regard, we beg Leave to take Notice of a *Doctrine* delivered in them which is extremely dangerous and false: A Doctrine which, should it generally be received and obeyed, (which God prevent) would immediately fill the World with Ruin and Confusion; would drive all *Honesty and Virtue, Religion and Truth* from it, as far as the combin'd Power of Men and Devils could do it, and set up *Error, and Tyranny, and Vice* in their Stead. The Doctrine we mean is *Sermon II. Page 48, 49.*

(a) *Neal's Hist. of the Purit.* Vol. IV. Page 588.

where 'tis affirm'd, That "the State may, by
 " proper Laws and Penalties, hinder the Growth
 " and Progress of Heresies---And Heresy may
 " be as lawfully animadverted on and punished
 " as Prophaneness and Vice; and something
 " may and OUGHT to be done by Way of Pu-
 " nishment against Hereticks". If the civil
 Magistrate has, according to this Doctrine, Au-
 thority from GOD to PUNISH Heresy; he must
 have Authority to JUDGE of it, or to DE-
 TERMINE what it is. But if the Magistrate in
England has this Authority from GOD to *judge*
 and *determine* what is Heresy, the Magistrates of
Spain, *Turkey*, *Judæa*, have the same: What-^{p 21.}
 ever then these Magistrates *judge* to be Heresy,
 they may, they OUGHT to, crush by *proper Pe-*
nalties, i. e. by *such Penalties* as to them shall
seem best; for of the *Propriety* of Penalties them-
 selves only must be the *Judges*. Hence then it fol-
 lows, that when the *Popish Queen Mary* judg-
 ed her *Protestant Subjects* guilty of Heresy, and
 worthy of Death; when *Nero* judged the same
 of the *Christians* at *Rome*; and *Pontius Pilate*,
 and the *Jewish Council* judged the same of JE-
 SUS CHRIST, they had a Right, an Authority
 to inflict this Penalty upon them----*We have a*
Law, and by our Law he ought to die, said the top
 Priests and Doctors, as well as Magistrates of
 that Church---So then, they fell not by *wicked*,
 but by *righteous* and *just* Hands; and the Blood
 of these Martyrs was *innocently* spilt--But an Hint
 is sufficient to expose the horrid Absurdity and
 Danger of this Doctrine.

WE conclude, by taking Notice of a Charge advanced against us of a very extraordinary Nature, but which rather provokes our *Mirth* than our *Pain*. In this Matter of our *Separation*, "*we act from Policy and WORLDLY INTEREST,---and for our own FILTHY LUCRE'S SAKE, lead Men into this dangerous and destructive Schism (a).*" You smiled, *Gentlemen*, no Doubt, when you heard us *thus* accused. This *finishes* our Character: We are, it seems, not *Hypocrites* only, but *Ideots* too, as devoid of *Sense*, as of *Grace*. The *Children of this World* use to be *wiser* in their Generation than the *Children of Light*; but behold! here are *Schismatics* and *Sinners*, so left of Heaven and infatuated, as to seek worldly Wealth and Preferment in a Way of worldly Persecution and Disgrace. They sell their Conscience, and their Virtue, and have not one *Benefice*, not one *Dignity*, nothing but Contempt and hard Names to their Bargain: Whereas, there is ANOTHER MARKET to which they might go, and, at the same Time, purchase great Opulence, many Honours, and stand a fair Chance for Lordships, and Mitres, and Coaches and fix,---What! was it the *Love of filthy Lucre* which made our Fathers quit their Livings and Dignities in the Church, to the Number of near Two thousand, and throw themselves and their Families upon the wide World for Support; *going out*, like *their Father Abraham*, *not knowing whither they went*? Was it in Pursuit of WORLDLY

INTEREST, that the brave Assertors of CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, who stood by and patronised them, subjected themselves to the Mercy of insatiable Informers; had their Houses rifled; their Goods sold; were haled before insulting Magistrates; squeezed now in the *spiritual*, then in the *civil Courts*; and while their *Bodies* lay languishing in nasty Goals, their *Families* and *Estates* bled under the Wounds of Fines, Prosecutions, and extraordinary Expence? Never, surely, were Men more *infatuated*, if the Accusation be true; but if it confutes itself, and carries Falshood in its Face, never was an Accuser more ungenerous, or more weak!

THRO' the Goodness of GOD, and our wise Rulers, the *present Followers* of this noble Army are not thus harrassed. But are we not severely censured and reviled, like the Christians of old, *a Sect every where spoke against*? Are not all Honours and Preferments, both in *Church* and in *State*, kept carefully from us? And if we will worship GOD according to what we think the *Scriptural Mode*, without mingling with it the Injunctions and *Commandments of Men*, must it not be with additional Expence? Are there any *Bishopricks*, or *Dignities*, or *Sinecures* amongst us, whence hundreds, yea, thousands *p. An.* flow comfortably in upon us; which might tempt a Man to warp a little, and strain a Point of Conscience, *thro' a vitious Indulgence of Ease and Sloth*? "The Number of
 " Officers and Attendants belonging to Arch-
 F 2 " bishops,

“ bishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and Cathedral Deans only, in *England*, amount to more than *Twenty thousand* Persons, besides *preaching Ministers*; and these receive, for their Maintenance, every Year from the Country, nigh a *Million* of Money (a).” And if the Revenue only of these *Officers* and *Attendants* be so plenteous, how almost *immense* is that of the *Archbishopricks*, *Bishopricks*, *Deaneries*, *Archdeaconries*, &c. and *parochial Livings*, throughout the *Realm*? If the *Dissenters* were Men so in Love with *filthy Lucre*, and so devoted to *worldly Interest* as the *Sermons* represent them, ’tis strange they do not put in for a Share in this *immense* Benevolence of their Country; and endeavour to live at Ease upon the Sweat and Labour of industrious People, as well as other Men. That learned and pious Foreigner, (*Monsieur Jurieu*) spoke not of the *Dissenters*, when he said, “ The Religion of the Church of *England*, is *Religion de Benefice*.”

AND NOW, GENTLEMEN, having made our Defence before you, and pleaded *Not guilty* to the high Crimes charged upon us; we humbly leave it to your *Judgment*, whether we had not *just Grounds of Complaint*. The *Dissenters* are not Persons of so perverse a Turn of Mind as our Accuser represents: They are ambitious of your Favour, and desire to leave in Peace and Amity with all Men. All they request is, Li-

(a) A brief View of *Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction*, addressed to Sir *Nath. Curzon*, printed 1733.

berly to worship GOD in *that Manner* which they think most agreeable to *his Will*; and to pay the Homage of their *Conscience* to JESUS its *only* Sovereign: Liberty to *reject those Things* which were *confessedly* NO Parts of GOD's Worship in THAT CHURCH which *Christ* and his Apostles *established*; and humbly to presume, that no Powers now on Earth can *establish* A CHURCH upon a better or more perfect Plan, nor worship in a more *decent* and *orderly* Manner, than *Christ* and his Apostles did: This is *all* the Liberty we ask. As for our Brethren, who think the *present humanly established* Forms better than the *primitive, apostolick* and DIVINE ones, we wish them ever the fullest Liberty to use them, and great religious Improvement and Success in their Use.

'TWILL be said, perhaps,---You have then the Liberty you ask: Nay, *Gentlemen*, but you will give us Leave to *complain*, and to insist upon it before you, that we *have it not*. For we have Right, (an unalienable fundamental Right by the Constitution of the Christian Church, as *Brethren* and *Fellow-Christians* to all good Men in the Establishment, to *eat with them* at the Table or Supper of our COMMON LORD: 'Tis a COMMUNION, or *Common-Table*, which the great *Steward* or *Lord* in the House or Church of GOD hath erected; and *at this*, ALL the Children of this ONE Family, ALL the Servants of this ONE Master, are invited, and *bid* to eat, both to strengthen and shew forth their Commu-
nion

nion in one Body, and their Love to one another. Now this is our Complaint; That several Members of this great Family have formed themselves into a *Party*, and made a Law amongst themselves, that no Member shall *eat with them*, who, besides the Terms and Qualifications made necessary by our COMMON LORD, will not also submit to certain Terms and Qualifications laid down by themselves. This we take to be not only an Invasion of the Rights of all the *other Members* of this great Household, but directly tends to throw it into Parties and Confusion, and to destroy its Order and Peace. For by the same Authority by which *some Members* clan together in one Part, and refuse their Brethren to *eat with them*, except in *this Posture*, or in *that Dress*; *other Members* may do the same in another Part of this great Family, and insist upon some *other Terms* from all who will *eat with them*. And thus the UNITY of the House is broke: They *eat not* at the *Lord's Table*, i. e. at the COMMON TABLE their LORD hath erected, but at a *separate Table* of their own erecting: And it is not the COMMUNION, i. e. the *common Supper* of CHRIST they eat, but a *Supper* of their own. They have destroyed its *Community*; they forbid it to be *common*; and tho' the Master hath left it *open*, for ALL his Servants to come and *eat at*; they have inclosed and fenced it in by Terms of their own devising: So that it is not enough, that a Man be a *true Servant* of CHRIST, to entitle him to this

Bread of his House ; he must be a *Servant* also, and *pay Subjection* to some Authority *besides Christ's*, to qualify him for this Supper.---Does not every one see that this is plainly SCHISMATICAL ; *that thus to come together is not to eat the LORD's Supper*, but a *Supper of their own* ; and that those who do thus, do hereby cut themselves off from the *Communion of Saints*?

WE therefore beg Leave to add, that *the Things* in which *we differ* from our Brethren of the Establishment, are *those*, and only *those*, in which *they differ* (themselves being Judges) from *Christ* and the *Apostles*. If they will please to *lay aside*, or to leave *indifferent*, those *Rites in GOD's Worship* which themselves perfectly know neither *Christ*, nor his *Apostles*, nor the first Christians *ever used*, and which they freely confess to be but COMMANDMENTS OF MEN, the *Dissenters* will be no more,---the Difference betwixt us will immediately cease.

BUT if we cannot be so happy as to *eat with our Brethren*, and be owned by them as *such*, according to our Lord's Appointment at his *common Table* on Earth, 'tis our Pleasure to be assured we shall shortly meet them in Regions of greater Calmness and Light ; and shall *eat and drink with them at his Table in his Kingdom*, without such unkind and unbrotherly Restraints. *There*, we are sure, they will treat us with greater Candour ; applaud what now they censure ; and *receive* us with so much the warmer Friendship and Esteem, for the Shyness and
Severity

Severity with which they have cast us out. Till these *Times of refreshing shall come from Christ's Presence*, we will, by his Grace, bear patiently the unrighteous Censures of rash Men; *not rendering Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing, knowing that thereunto we are called*; being the Followers of an insulted JESUS, who also, when upon Earth, was, by Bigotry and blind Zeal, called a SAMARITAN and a SINNER.

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